

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 MOSCOW 00151 051321Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00
INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 CU-04 BIB-01
HA-05 IO-13 OIC-02 ACDA-12 TRSE-00 /095 W
-----074624 051326Z /44

O R 051250Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 6322
INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 0151

PLEASE PASS AMBASSADOR GOLDBERG

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: CSCE, UR, IN
SUBJECT: VORONTSOV APPOINTMENT

REF: STATE 1737

1. WE HAVE NOT YET BEEN ABLE TO GLEAN ANYTHING FROM SOVIET OFFICIALS ON THE SIGNIFICANCE OF VORONTSOV'S APPOINTMENT TO NEW DELHI AS IT RELATES TO THE BRLGRADE TALKS. WE ARE ALSO NOT REPEAT NOT OPTIMISTIC THAT SOVIETS WILL BE PREPARED TO GIVE VERY USEFUL AND CANDID ANSWERS ON THIS SCORE. YUGOSLAV DCM SAYS HIS EMBASSY HAS NOTHING SOLID FROM SOVIETS BUT THAT BELGRADE HAS THE IMPRESSION THAT VORONTSOV WILL RETURN.

2. EMBOFF DID DISCUSS VORONTSOV APPOINTMENT WITH SOVIET MFA SOUTH ASIAN DEPT. CHIEF BOLDYREV JAN 3. BOLDYREV REFUSED TO SAY ANYTHING OTHER THAN VORONTSOV'S APPOINTMENT TO DELHI DOES NOT REPRESENT A DOWNGRADING OF INDIA IN SOVIET EYES, EVEN THOUGH VORONTSOV'S PREDECESSOR
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MALTSEV IS A FULL MEMBER OF THE CPSU CC AND VORONTSOV IS NOT EVEN A CANDIDATE MEMBER. MALTSEV HAS LEFT DELHI AND IS NOW SERVING IN MFA AS ONE OF TWO FIRST DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTERS. THE INDIAN EMBASSY HERE STATES IT HAS NO INDICATION OF VORONTSOV'S ETA, NEW DELHI.

3. WHILE WE WOULD WISH TO DEFER FINAL ANALYSIS OF VORONTSOV'S REASSIGNMENT PENDING ADQUISITION OF MORE INFORMATION, WE WOULD NEVERTHELESS POINT OUT THAT MOSCOW LOOKS ON INDIA AS AN IMPORTANT ALLY IN ASIS AND THE THIRD WORLD, AN ALLY IN WHICH IT HAS INVESTED A GREAT DEAL. VORONTSOV IS THEREFORE GOING TO ONE OF THE MORE IMPORTANT AND PRESTIGIOUS SOVIET POSTS ABROAD. IT IS ALSO NOTEWORTHY THAT HIS APPOINTMENT IS UNUSUALLY CHALLENGING, COMING AT A TIME WHEN INDIAN DOMESTIC POLITICS MAY BE ENTERING A PERIOD OF FLUX AND POSSIBLE REALIGNMENTS FOLLOWING MRS. GANDHI'S SPLITTING OF THE CONGRESS PARTY. DURING HIS LONG TENURE IN THE U.S., VORONTSOV WAS PARTICULARLY SKILLFUL AND ENERGETIC IN REPRESENTING THE SOVIET VIEWPOINT IN EXCELLENT ENGLISH TO A WIDE VARIETY OF AUDIENCES. MOSCOW WILL COUNT ON HIM TO DO THE SAME IN DELHI, WITH THE OBJECTIVE OF PRE-SERVING AND STRENGTHENING SOVIET INFLUENCE AND THE GOOD WILL ENTERTAINED BY MANY INDIANS TOWARD THE SOVIET UNION DURING A FLUID PERIOD IN INDIAN POLITICS. MATLOCK

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PERSONNEL APPOINTMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 05 jan 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978MOSCOW00151
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780008-0561
Format: TEL
From: MOSCOW
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780197/aaaaddpb.tel
Line Count: 83
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 68d18be6-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 STATE 1737
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 12 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3824875
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: VORONTSOV APPOINTMENT
TAGS: APER, UR, IN, CSCE, (VORONTSOV)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/68d18be6-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014